

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01 SS-15 L-03

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R 112115Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1091

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 9913

S/NM FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

SER/INC FOR WAMPLER

DEA FOR ADMIN DOGIN AND EOI CUSACK

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR MX

SUBJECT: CONVERSATIONS WITH MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL

REF: CARACAS 11526

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING THE ARA COORDINATORS' CONFERENCE IN CARACAS, AMBASSADOR VANCE AND OTHER U.S.G. OFFICIALS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL PEDRO OJEDA PAULLADA AT A LUNCHEON HOSTED BY AMBASSADOR JOVA ON NOV 8. IN ATTENDANCE FOR THE MEXICANS WERE THE AG; OVERALL CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR, DR ALEJANDRO GERTZ MANERO; AND LIC. RAUL ORTIZ Y ORTIZ, INTERPRETER. THE U.S.G. WAS REPRESENTED BY AMBASSADOR JOVA; AMBASSADOR VANCE, S/NM; HENRY DOGAN, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEA; WILLIAM CAULDERHEAD, EMBASSY ADMIN COUNSELOR; JOHN CUSACK (DEA); RICHARD DUGSTAD S/NM; MARY WAMPLER (SER/INC); DEA RD ROBERT EYMAN; DEA DRD, EDWARD HEATH; CAESAR P. BERNAL, NAU PROGRAM OFFICER; AND FRANCESCO ALBERTI, NARCOTICS COORDINATOR. THE CONVERSATION REPEATED A GOOD DEAL OF MATERIAL ALREADY REPORTED IN REFTEL. IN ADDITION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MADE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT COMMENTS:

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END SUMMARY.

2. (A) HERBICIDES: THE AG SAID HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN INFORMED BY DR GERTZ THAT THE HERBICIDE THE GOM WAS MOST INTERESTED IN USING (PARAQUOT) IS PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED COMMERCIALLY IN MEXICO, AND HAS FOR MANY YEARS BEEN USED BY COTTON FARMERS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY. WITH THIS KNOWLEDGE, HE STATED, HE NO LONGER SEES A SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEM OR RISK ATTENDING ITS USE; THEREFORE, THE GOM PLANS ON NOV 15 TO BEGIN THE WIDE-SPREAD USE OF THIS HERBICIDE, TO BE APPLIED IN RELATIVELY FLAT, LOWLYING AREAS BY FIXED-WING, COMMERCIAL CROP-SPRAYING AIRCRAFT CONTRACTED FROM THE MEXICAN PRIVATE SECTOR. ON PLANTATIONS IN THE RUGGED, INACCESSIBLE HIGH MOUNTAINS, THE GOM WILL USE HELICOPTER-BORNE SYSTEMS OR BACK-PACK SPRAYERS. THE AG SAID THAT AS A GOOD MEXICAN, HE COULD NOT APPROVE THE USE OF ANY SUBSTANCES WHICH WOULD UPSET THE ECOLOGICAL BALANCE OR STERILIZE MEXICAN SOIL FOR PROLONGED PERIODS; BUT WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT PARAQUOT WAS USED COMMERCIALLY AND HAD NO LONG-LASTING SIDE EFFECTS, HE FELT FREE TO AUTHORIZE ITS EXTENSIVE USE IN THE FORTHCOMING CAMPAIGN. THE AG PLANS TO PURCHASE THE INITIAL QUANTITIES OF PARAQUOT (OR "GRAMOXONE", THE MEXICAN TRADE NAME) FROM STOCKS AVAILABLE IN CULIACAN. AFTER THAT HE HOPES THE U.S. G. CAN PROCURE THE NECESSARY RAW MATERIALS FOR SUPPLY TO THE MEXICAN DISTRIBUTOR, IF LOCAL STOCKS PROVE INSUFFICIENT. AG PLANS PURCHASE SPRAY RIG IN SINALOA AS HIGHLY VISIBLE STARTER BUT WOULD ASK U.S. TO SUPPLY ADDITIONAL SPRAYERS.

B. PUBLICITY: IN ORDER TO LAY THE NECESSARY GROUNDWORK FOR PUBLICIZING THE CAMPAIGN, THE AG PLANS TO SEEK AN APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA ON NOV 11. HE WILL NOTIFY THE PRESS, WHO WILL THEN BE AWAITING HIM UPON HIS EMERGENCE FROM THE APPOINTMENT. AT THAT TIME, HE WILL INFORM THE PRESS OF ALL THE MEASURES THE GOM HAS TAKEN OR PLANS TO TAKE IN CONNECTION WITH THE CAMPAIGN. HE ALSO AT THAT TIME WILL EXPLAIN THE USE OF HERBICIDES AS AN ENTIRELY MEXICAN PROGRAM USING CHEMICAL AGENTS ALREADY IN EXTENSIVE COMMERCIAL USE IN MEXICAN AGRICULTURE. THE AG EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT PRESIDENT FORD OR OTHER HIGH US GOVT OFFICIALS WILL THEN BE ABLE TO ISSUE A PRESS STATEMENT RESPONDING TO THIS IN A POSITIVE AND COOPERATIVE VEIN, UNDERSCORING THE GREAT IMPORTANCE THE U.S.G. ATTACHES TO THE

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NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN GENERAL AND TO THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN PARTICULAR.

C. SATELLITES: IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR VANCE'S QUESTION, THE AG SAID THAT THE GOM WAS INTERESTED IN THE PROPOSED USE OF ERTS OR SIMILAR SATELLITE SYSTEMS TO SPOT POPPY CULTIVATION IN MEXICO. HE SAID THAT HE NOW BELIEVES HE IS IN A POSITION TO HANDLE ANY POLITICAL OR BUREAUCRATIC PROBLEMS WITHIN THE

MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WHICH MIGHT BE GENERATED BY THE USE OF SATELLITES FOR THIS PURPOSE AND THAT HE WOULD BE READY TO INITIATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT IF IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT EXISTING TECHNOLOGY IS SUFFICIENT TO DO THE JOB. AMBASSADOR VANCE REPLIED THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE STATE OF THE ART AND THE COSTS INVOLVED, EVEN SENDING AN EXPERT TO MEXICO TO BRIEF THE AG IF THAT APPEARED WARRANTED.

D. WHILE ESCORTING THE AG FROM THE RESIDENCE, AMBASSADOR VANCE REFERRED TO CONCERN THE AG HAD EXPRESSED PRIOR TO THE PAST CAMPAIGN CONCERNING THE PRESENCE OF U.S.G. PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD. AMBASSADOR VANCE ASKED IF THIS WAS STILL A PROBLEM OR WHETHER US GOVERNMENT PRESENCE MIGHT BE INCREASED DURING THE FORTHCOMING CAMPAIGN. THE AG REPLIED THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE A GREAT PROBLEM, SO LONG AS DEA AGENTS DO NOT APPEAR TOO OFTEN IN COMPANY WITH GOM AGENTS EITHER AT ROAD BLOCKS OR AT FORWARD BASES. HE SAID THAT TOO OBTRUSIVE U.S. PRESENCE IN THE FIELD TENDED TO CAUSE A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM FOR MEXICAN PERSONNEL.

3. ONCE AGAIN, AS IN THE NOV 4 CONVERSATION REPORTED IN REFTEL, THE BURDEN OF THE AG'S REMARKS (MANY OF WHICH SEEMED TO BE DELIVERED FOR THE RECORD) WAS TO HIGHLIGHT THE GOM PLANS FOR THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN AND TO REEMPHASIZE THE GOM'S COMMENT TO THE ENTIRE COOPERATIVE NARCOTICS EFFORT. AS BEFORE, THE AG APPEARED QUITE CONCERNED THAT THIS MESSAGE BE GOTTON ACROSS TO PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER AND THAT THEY BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH MEXICO VIEWS THE ENTIRE NARCOTICS ISSUE, AND THE DETERMINATION OF MEXICAN OFFICIALS EFFECTIVELY TO ATTACK THAT PROBLEM.

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